

## WOMEN EMPOWERMENT & GENDER INCLUSION FUND: EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE VISION IN THE NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL POLICY 2020

---

Dr. Aishvarya Bansal\*  
Dr. Poonam Bewtra\*\*

### ABSTRACT

*The National Education Policy, laying down a road map for the next two decades, has been adopted in the midst of a pandemic and a lockdown. The New Education Policy (2020) is a ray of hope recognizing equitable inclusive education: Learning for All. Today 'Beti Padhao, Beti Bachao' has reached new heights and with the advent of NEP 2020, greater emphasis is being laid upon education of women. The GOI constituted a "Gender Inclusion Fund" to provide quality and equitable education for all girls. The fund will focus on ensuring 100% enrolment of girls in schooling and a record participation rate in higher education, decrease gender gaps at all levels, practice gender equity and inclusion in society. Gender imbalance has been noticed under many areas, especially the rural. The inclusion of transgender students in "Gender Inclusion Fund" is particularly significant in the backdrop of Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act. The NEP now states that the "Gender Inclusion Fund" will be available to states to implement priorities determined by the central government critical for assisting female and transgender children in gaining access to education (such as the provisions of sanitation and toilets, bicycles, conditional cash transfers, etc.). Study is based on primary data which was collected via well-structured questionnaire to various schools in Delhi/NCR region. Finally, data was collected from 19 schools shared via Email ID with the administrators of schools and the collected data was analysed using secondary sources available on HRD Ministry website, UGC website, CBSE website, and other official websites of Government of India, online resources, research papers, journals and periodicals. The data collected was summarized using charts and tables. The questionnaire was structured in various parts: First part was about school enrolment ratio 2020-2021 to 2021-2022 in Higher Secondary (11-12), Secondary (9-10), Upper Primary (6-8), Upper Primary (6-8), Pre-Primary in various categories (boys, girls, transgender). Second part was about school infrastructure with (9 parameters). Third part collected details about gender equality (2 parameters), gender sensitization (9 parameters). Fourth part collected the details about the implementation of NEP 2020 in schools with (9 parameters). Data from 19 schools in Delhi region is analyzed through charts and tables in order to assess the level of implementation of NEP 2020.*

---

**Keywords:** Gender Inclusion Fund, National Education Policy, Transgenders, Women Empowerment.

---

### Introduction

Women empowerment has been the top priority of the government under the leadership of Honorable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and the government has also launched several schemes in this direction. All the schemes, be it Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Yojana, Balika Samridhi Yojana, CBSE Udaan scholarship Yojana, have only one goal; empowerment, literacy, self-reliance and overall development of the girls/women of the country. The Policy recognizing equitable inclusive education: Learning for All.

---

\* Assistant Professor, Delhi University, Delhi, India.

\*\* Associate Professor, Delhi University, Delhi, India.

According to U-DISE 2016-17 data, about 19.6% of students belong to SC at the primary level, but this fraction falls to 17.3% at the higher secondary level. These enrolment drop-offs are more severe for ST students (10.6% to 6.8%), and differently-abled children (1.1% to 0.25%), with even greater declines for female students within each of these categories. The decline in enrolment in higher education is even steeper. (education.gov.in)[1]

**Table 1: U-DISE Report 2016-17**

Category	Enrolment @ primary level	result	Enrolment @ Higher Secondary level
SC	19.6%	↓	17.3%
ST	10.6%	↓	6.8%
differently-abled children	1.1%	↓	0.25%

Greater decline for females in each of these categories

Source: udiseplus.gov.in/

#### **Action Plan to Ensure High Enrolment Ratio of Girls**

NEP 2020 will focus on the safety and security of school-going girls both inside and outside of the campus. The schools have to ensure harassment, discrimination, and domineer free campus before enlisting for yearly accreditation. This will increase the attendance number of girl children in the class. The policy will identify gender stereotypes that prevent girls from accessing education and causing regular dropouts.

The Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education (MoE) is implementing Samagra Shiksha - an Integrated Scheme for School Education (ISSE) under which various interventions have been targeted for Girls' Education. Bridging gender and social category gaps at all levels of school education is one of the major objectives of the Samagra Shiksha. The various interventions under Samagra Shiksha to ensure greater participation of girls in education include:

- Opening of schools in the neighbourhood as defined by the State,
- Provision of free text-books to girls up to Class VIII,
- Uniforms to all girls, SC, ST children and Below Poverty Line (BPL) children up to class VIII,
- Provision of gender segregated toilets in all schools,
- Teachers' sensitization programmes to promote girls' participation,
- Provision for Self-Defence training for the girls from classes VI to XII,
- Stipend to CWSN girls from class I to Class XII,
- Residential Schools/Hostels,
- Construction of residential quarters for teachers in remote/hilly areas/in areas with difficult terrain.

In addition to this, to reduce gender gaps at all levels of school education and for providing quality education to girls from disadvantaged groups, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) have been sanctioned in Educationally Backward Blocks (EBBs) under Samagra Shiksha. (INVC Desk, 2021)<sup>[2]</sup>

The Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports have promoted inclusivity, created an ecosystem of awareness towards women in sports and inspired a generation of young girls to actively take part in sports. An exclusive component of the Khelo India Scheme focuses on barriers faced by girls & women to take part in sporting activities, and creating mechanisms to overcome these and increase their participation. There has been a 161% increase in women participation at the Khelo India Games from 2018 to 2020. From 657 identified female athletes being supported under the Khelo India scheme in 2018, the number has now gone up to 1471 (223% increase). 86 women athletes were a part of the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) program in September 2018 and today we have 190 of them (220% jump). (Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, 2021)<sup>[3]</sup>

The Department of Science and Technology (DST) has launched Knowledge Involvement in Research Advancement through (KIRAN) Scheme to provide various career opportunities to women scientists and technologists. It is primarily aimed to bring gender parity in Science & Technology sector by inducting more women talent in the research & development domain through various programmes. More than 2200 women scientists & technologists have benefitted from the Women Scientists Scheme (WOS) in last five years and current year. (Women Scientists Programs )<sup>[4]</sup> The Ministry of Skill Development is making efforts for building conducive ecosystem for skilling women in India. Out of 33 National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs), 19 NSTIs are providing skill training exclusively for women. In NSTIs 3,400 seats have been sanctioned under Craftsman Training Scheme and 2,225 seats have been sanctioned under Crafts Instructor Training Scheme (CITS). 421 women have been trained in Advanced Diploma in IT networking and Cloud Computing till December, 2020. (Ministry of Women and Child Development, 2021)<sup>[5]</sup>

In the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) which aims to promote apprenticeship training in the country by providing stipend support to the apprentices. Apprenticeship training is one of the key components for creating skilled manpower in India and contributes to make India 'Skill capital of the world'. All these have led to increase in the number of apprentices from 2.90 lakh in 2020-21 to 5.8 lakh in 2021-22 and expenditure from Rs. 120 crore to Rs 217 crore during the same period. During the current year, the number of apprentices is expected to reach 10 lakh. (Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, 2022)<sup>[6]</sup> The Census 2011 recorded literacy of women at 65.5%, Muslims at 68.5% and Schedule Caste around 66%. Despite significant improvements in many crucial areas, Indian education systems continue to grapple with challenges of inequity and exclusion. Access to quality school education is still a dream for most rural population. This is even more acute in the higher education sector. To combat this, alternate pathways for female teacher recruitment will be introduced without compromising on merit and qualification. The teachers, Anganwadi workers, and local social entrepreneurs will be trained to deliver proper counselling to girl children's families to curb the girl dropout rate.

### Research Methodology

Study is based on primary data which was collected via well-structured questionnaire to various schools in Delhi and NCR region. Finally, data was collected from 19 schools and the collected data was analysed using secondary sources available on HRD Ministry website, UGC website, CBSE website, and other official websites of Government of India, online resources, research papers, journals and periodicals. The data collected was summarised using charts and tables. The questionnaire was structured in various parts: First part was about school enrolment ratio 2020-2021 to 2021-2022 in Higher Secondary (11-12), Secondary (9-10), Upper Primary (6-8), Upper Primary (6-8), Pre-Primary in various categories (boys, girls, transgender). Second part was about school infrastructure with (9 parameters). Third part collected details about gender equality (2 parameters), gender sensitisation (9 parameters). Fourth part collected the details about the implementation of NEP 2020 in schools with (9 parameters).

**Table 2: Sample Population for Study**

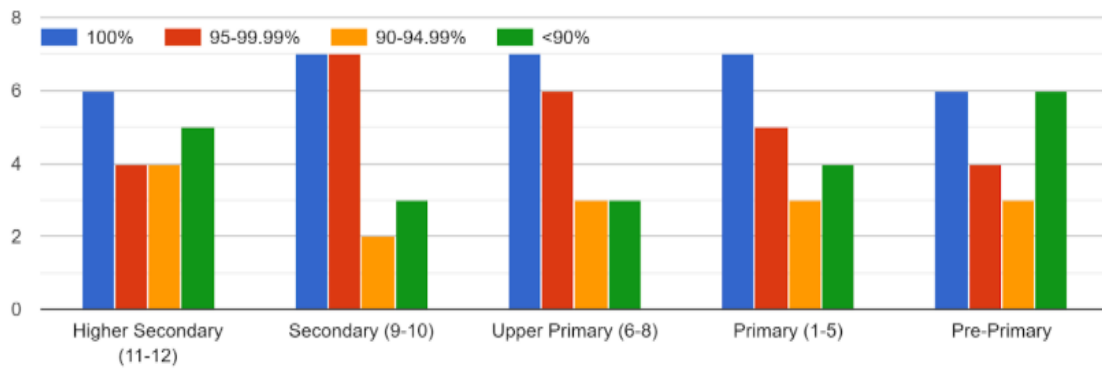
S. No.	The following Schools Participated in Survey
1	DAV Public School Sreshtha Vihar
2	DAV Public School Ashok Vihar Ph - IV Delhi
3	M L Khanna DAV Public School, Dwarka, New Delhi
4	D.A.V. Centenary Public School Chander Nagar, Ghaziabad
5	DAV Jasola Vihar
6	SLSDAV Public School Mausam Vihar Delhi
7	DAVPS Pushpanjali Enclave
8	Hansraj Model School Punjabi Bagh Delhi
9	Dav public school , sector 7, Rohini
10	Srdavdayanandvihar
11	Kulachi Hansraj Model School
12	DARBARI LAL DAV Model School, Pitampura, Delhi
13	DAV Centenary Public School
14	Suraj bhan DAV public school
15	DAV Public School, Uppal's Southend, Sector-49, Gurugram
16	Gyanshree School
17	DAV Public School Kailash Hills
18	DAV Multipurpose Public School, Sonapat
19	DAV Public School Sector 14 Gurugram

**Data Analysis and Results**

Data from 19 schools in Delhi NCR region is analysed through charts and tables. The data is collected via a well-structured questionnaire prepared via Google Docs and shared via Email ID with the administrators of various schools in the Delhi/NCR region. In order to assess the level of implementation of NEP 2020, data was collected from 19 schools listed below.

An important factor in determining the enrolment of students from lower grades into their upper grades is the school enrolment ratio. The data is analysed on the basis of various levels of schooling starting from pre-primary, primary from 1st standard to 5th standard, upper primary from 6th standard to 8th standard, secondary from 9th to 10th standard and Higher Secondary from 11th to 12th standard. The data shows the school enrolment ratio from 2020 -2021 to 2021-2022 at different levels of schooling in all the 19 schools from Delhi NCR region. The data shows that the enrolment ratio is highest at the secondary level in the schools which are followed by upper primary.

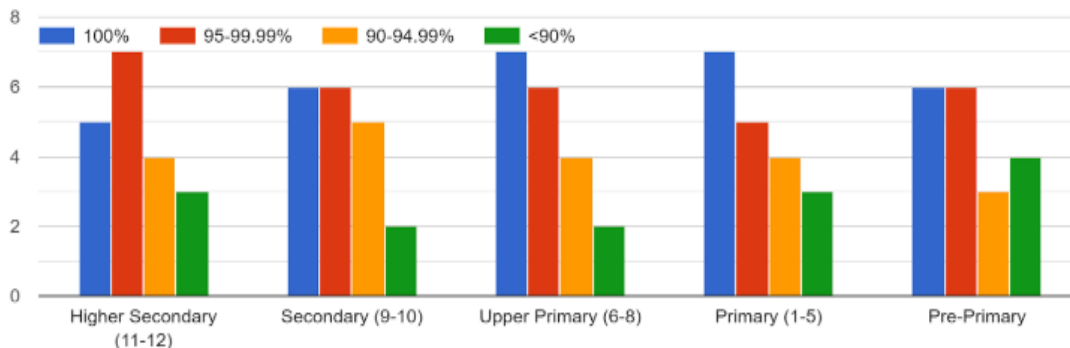
**SCHOOL ENROLMENT RATIO 2020-2021 to 2021-2022**



**Figure 1: School Enrolment Ratio**

The data shows (in figure1) that 7 schools out of sample of 19 shows that the school enrolment ratio is 100% from class 6-10, and second highest at secondary level to 95-99.99% as reported by 7 schools. There were very few schools at secondary level which reported the school enrolment ratio at 90-94.99% and less than 90%. Overall the school enrolment was greater than 95% in majority of schools.

**ENROLMENT RATIO OF BOYS IN 2020-2021 to 2021-2022**



**Figure 2: School Enrolment Ratio of Boys**

The data shows (in figure 2) that the enrolment ratio of boys is highest at 100% at upper primary and primary level whereas the enrolment ratio is lowest at Pre-primary level in the majority of schools. However, the enrolment ratio of the boys shows the improvement as the level increases from pre-primary to primary and from primary to upper primary.

ENROLMENT RATIO OF GIRLS IN 2020-2021 to 2021-2022

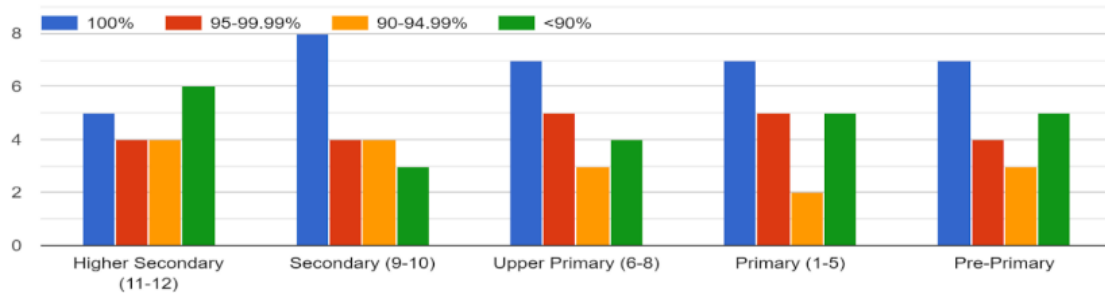


Figure 3: School Enrolment Ratio of Girls

The data shows that (in figure 3) the enrolment ratio of the girls from 2020-21 to 2021- 22 was highest at 100% at the secondary and upper primary level followed by primary and pre-primary. There as the enrolment ratio was lowest at less than 90% in majority of schools at the higher secondary level that is from 11th standard to 12th standard. The results obtained are crucial in analyzing that the dropout rate of the girls was highest at the higher secondary level probably because of lack of support from the family, disinterest in taking up higher education.

ENROLMENT RATIO OF SEDG's, TRANSGENDER IN 2020-2021 to 2021-2022

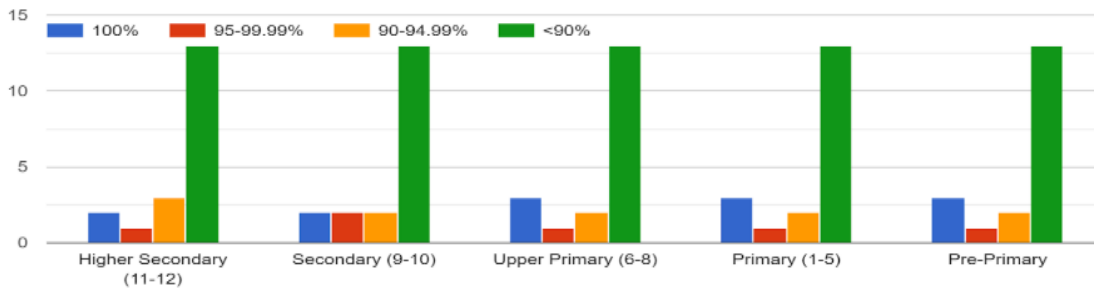


Figure 4: School Enrolment Ratio of Transgenders and SEDG's

In figure 4, the data show that the enrolment ratio of socially disadvantaged groups, transgender is lowest at all the levels of schooling at less than 90%. The implementation of NEP 2020 will pave the way for improvements in the enrolment ratio of this disadvantaged group and will help in the increase in enrolment ratio through initiatives like gender awareness programs, gender education, gender sensitization, gender equity, gender inclusion fund to support SEDG's and transgender.

SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

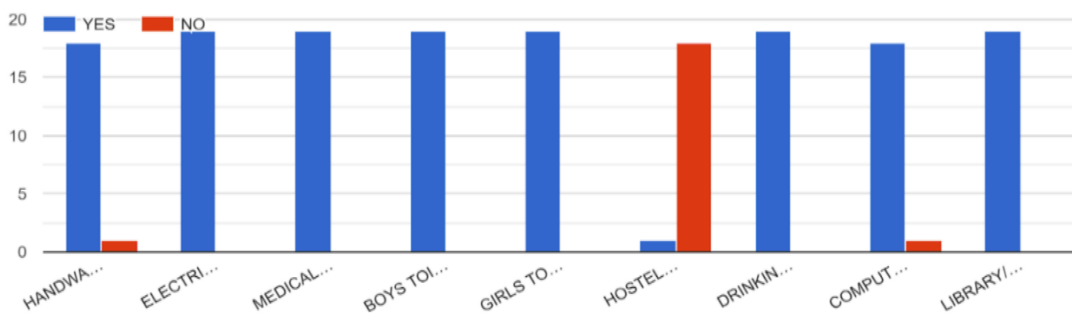
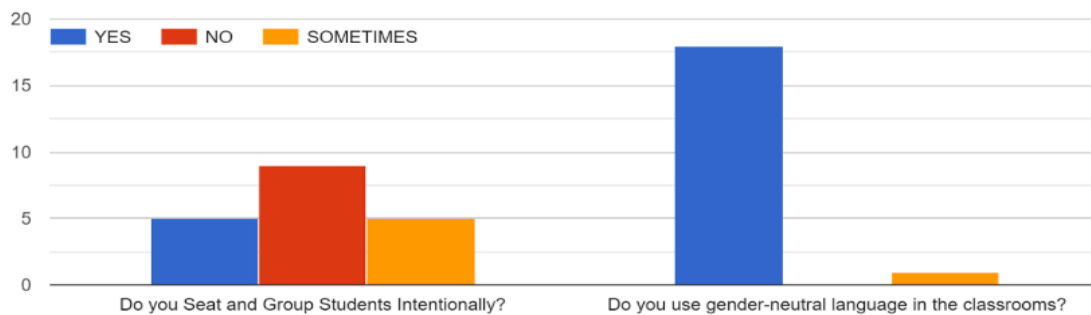


Figure 5: School Infrastructure According to NEP 2020 Parameters

Another important factor which increases the higher enrolment ratio in schools is the presence of adequate infrastructure and facilities in the schools as per figure 5. As per the data, results show that majorly all schools have 24\*7 electricity backup, medical facilities for students and staff (like regular body check-up, height and weight, eye- check-up). The results further show that almost all schools had provision of separate boys' toilets and girl's toilets, drinking water, library or reading room. The results show that less than 10% of the school complained about the inadequacy of hand wash facilities. Schools thus must ensure that hand wash facilities are made available to maintain a hygienic and neat environment and to promote healthy habits among the students. With the outbreak of covid-19 pandemic and especially in today's era it is important that all the schools must provide its students with adequate computer and internet facility. The data shows that almost all the schools have computer and internet facility for the students, but NEP 2020, aims to ensure that the internet and computer facility is available in 100% schools. The school must ensure this through adequate funding either through private donations or from the government.

It was very surprising that the data showed that majorly all the schools lacked the facility of hostels for the girls which is also an initiative to be adopted by the schools under NEP 2020 to promote safety to the girls who are coming from far off areas or regions as the schools in the campus enables the girls to access the education without the concerns of safety and restricted movement. The schools must work on developing the adequate hostel infrastructure to cope up with this problem.

#### GENDER EQUALITY ADOPTED



**Figure 6: Gender Equality Parameters under NEP 2020 in Schools**

In figure 6, to address the issue of gender equality and to understand its practical implementation in various schools the questionnaire consisting of two questions were asked to understand and get the quantitative data. It was found that there were no specific rules by the schools for the sitting arrangement of the students in the classroom. It was found that only 5 out of 19 schools' seat and group the students intentionally whereas 9 out of 19 schools are casual about the sitting arrangement of the students in the classroom. The Other schools follow it on a non-routine basis. Seating arrangement of students in the school is an important factor which helps to address the problems of gender equality amongst male and female students. Sitting arrangements of the students in the school on the basis of their gender like a boy cannot sit with a girl. Rather the students should have the freedom to interact with anyone in the classroom to achieve the much-needed gender equality among both the genders.

In the second question to assess the level of gender equality adopted in the classroom for the Teachers, the data shows that the majority of schools use gender neutral language in the classrooms, which promotes gender equality among the students. However, there are very few schools who use gender specific language. Those schools are advised not to promote any gender inequality in the classroom by addressing the students based on their gender rather schools should adopt the gender-neutral language to remove the disparity among the genders males and females and make the classroom environment much more friendly. In figure 7 below, Results show that the schools are gender sensitive and adopt various gender sensitisation schemes to enhance the awareness. The data shows that 100% of schools provide Training to its teachers. Schools also have transport facilities for the students to and from school which is very appreciable. Not only this, more than 90% of the schools have skill enhancement courses and programs for the students like dance classes, music, cooking, Sports. Also, the majority of schools provide Family counselling to reduce the gap between educated girls and uneducated families.

The component of sex education is made mandatory part of the teaching-learning process in the curriculum (including instruction on menstrual health and hygiene), apart from this awareness on legal literacy, female health and nutrition including Midday meals, breakfast, suggestions on healthy eating and Lifestyle change is conducted in majority of schools. The school also provides mandatory training for educators and administrators on efforts to prevent and respond to school-related gender-based violence. However there were very few schools that provided a creche facility for the educator.

GENDER SENSITIZATION ADOPTED

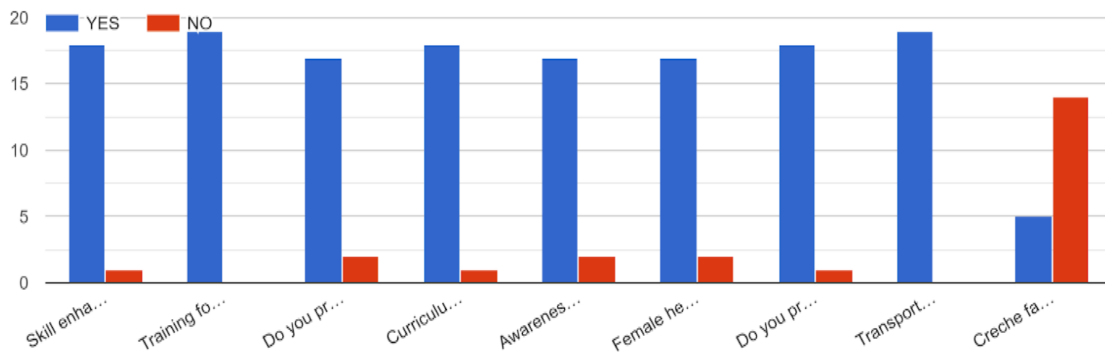


Figure 7: Gender Sensitisation Schemes Adopted in Schools under NEP 2020

NEP INITIATIVES ADOPTED

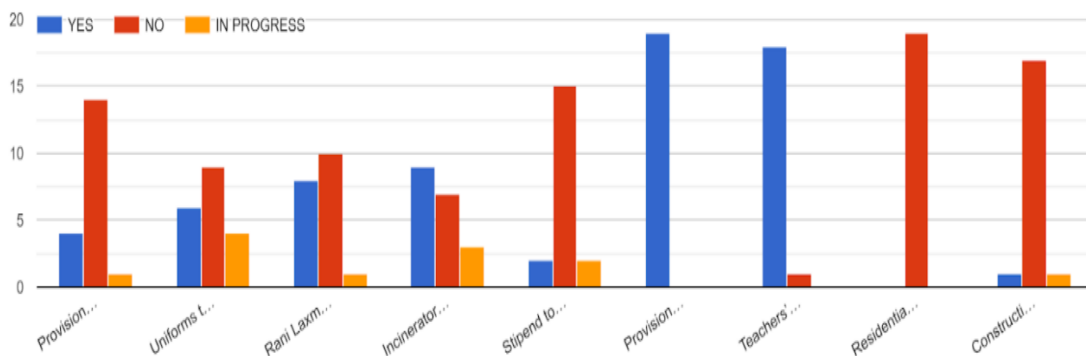
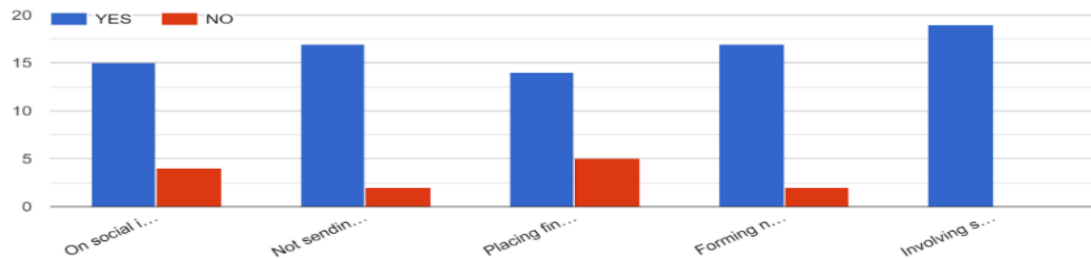


Figure 8: Initiatives under NEP2020 Adopted in Schools

Data in Figure 8 shows that the majority of schools followed the initiative under the new education policy 2020. It was found that all the schools had the provision of gender segregated toilets. Also, the majority of school's provide teachers sensitization programs to promote girls participation. among the other initiatives under the policy there were less than 50% schools provide Self defense training to the girls under Rani Lakshmbai Atma Raksha Prashikshan, and uniforms to the girls, SC, ST children and Below Poverty Line (BPL) children up to class VIII. Few Schools have the provision of Incinerator & Sanitary Pad Vending Machines. 30% schools have the provision of free text books upto class 8 to all children. Other important initiative of the policy like provision of residential schools or hostel for the students and construction of the residential quarters for teacher's in areas with difficult terrain is not present in majority of schools.

The schools must focus on achieving these initiatives at the earliest in the benefit of the students and take necessary help from government or other institutions to build a necessary infrastructure to support these initiatives.

## DO YOU HOLD REGULAR DISCUSSION WITH PARENTS ON ISSUES LIKE-



**Figure 9: Discussion with Parents on Various Issues by Schools**

According to the data in figure 9 the response for this was positive by majority of schools on holding regular discussions with the parents on issues like Child marriage, Girl child to high-School or for higher education, forming negative perceptions about women employment, involving school going children in the family profession for household work. However, there were 5 schools out of 19 schools who said that the school does not hold discussions with parents on issue like putting financial burden on the boy prematurity.

#### Key Challenges, Problems & Recommendations

- **Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs)**

The NEP 2020 recognises that certain groups are grossly underrepresented in the existing educational systems. To specially address their educational needs, the NEP has clubbed gender identities (particularly female and transgender individuals), socio-cultural identities (such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs, and minorities), geographical identities (such as students from villages, small towns, and aspirational districts), disabilities (including learning disabilities), disabilities, and socio-economic conditions (such as migrant communities, low income households, children in vulnerable situations, victims of or children of victims of trafficking, orphans including child beggars in urban areas, and the urban poor) to create a new social group called SEDGs. (TOI, Ambika Pandit, 2020)<sup>[8]</sup>

- **Problem Statement**

These groups have higher dropout rates due to a plethora of reasons, ranging from lack of accessibility for tribal communities (geographic) to historical exclusion of communities from systems of education for the socio-cultural identities categorization. School curriculums have remained silent on discrimination based on sexual identification and orientation of individuals and specific discrimination that transgender individuals face in workspaces even though there has been abolishment of Article 377.

- **Recommendation under NEP**

- Recognising their special needs, the NEP 2020 recommends a series of policies and schemes such as targeted scholarships,
- conditional cash transfers to incentivize parents to send their children to school,
- providing bicycles for transport that have worked in the past to increase enrolment,
- creating walking groups to schools to include community participation and make safety nets for these vulnerable students
- Recognition of gender Identities in 'Gender-Inclusion Fund' to create better educational spaces for women and transgender individuals.

- **Recognition of Individuals with Special Needs**

The policy recognizes children with special needs and believes in incorporating them into the mainstream education systems. The policy also aims to recruit special educators in all school complexes to make sure that teaching is more inclusive and cognizant of the needs of children. Children with benchmark disabilities will be allowed to opt for home schooling and would be provided with skilled home-schooling educators so that they can still learn and acquire the best educational facilities. Further, teachers will be trained to identify learning disabilities in children early on and to help children with learning disabilities succeed in education and take care of their mental health.



However, the NEP appears to be over ambitious and utopian on this front. It fails to recognize the fact that not only most teachers are poorly trained for such special assignments, it also misses to take into account how most of India's schools are grossly understaffed. The policy also doesn't clarify or elucidate how it plans to create alternative home-schooling mechanisms that are accessible to individuals.

The new policy fails to specify a roadmap of how it will make sure that education is made accessible to these individuals. It also doesn't specify what the change in the curriculum would be to make sure that children with learning disabilities don't feel excluded in the extremely competitive environments that Indian schools operate in today.

- **Creation of Special Educational Zones**

One of the standout recommendations of the NEP is the proposal to set up Special Educational Zones (SEZs) in regions with significant population belonging to Socio Economically Disadvantaged Groups. The key purpose is to spread education in the remotest and farthest places in India. This will be done by pumping extra resources and aligning multiple schemes and programmes of Centre and states to transform these backward regions.

While this idea is novel and holds promise to transform educational access in inaccessible areas of the country (such as urban ghettos with substantial minority population), the policy hasn't specified what the criterion for these zones would be and how will they be distinguished in urban and rural landscapes. The policy has no clear indicator of what would be the determining factors.

- **Gender Inclusion Fund**

The Government of India constituted a "Gender Inclusion Fund" to provide quality and equitable education for all girls. The fund will focus on ensuring 100% enrolment of girls in schooling and a record participation rate in higher education, decrease gender gaps at all levels, practice gender equity and inclusion in society. "Women empowerment is of prime importance. The girls/women are the backbone of a growing nation. Their upliftment directly impacts the growth and all rounded development of India. "According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) over 20 percent of girls drop out of school completely after reaching puberty in India. It has also been observed that a lot of girls drop out of schools when they hit puberty, since the school infrastructure is not conducive for their menstrual hygiene," (Shikha Jain, an educationist). Jain also asserted that the government should specify the amount available as part of the fund and lay down clear guidelines on how the corpus would be spent to address gender specific issues. "Gender should be used as a lens to look at initiatives such as digitisation of classrooms, increasing numeracy and literacy (since many girls are discouraged by the families to study maths and science from the beginning), rather than being treated as a standalone issue," she said. (IANS, 2019)<sup>[7]</sup>

Stressing on providing a safe environment for the girls in school, the policy also advocates laying down guidelines for ensuring school safety and security of girls. These guidelines will be developed and made a part of the eligibility conditions for institutional accreditation. "This framework will include mandatory training for educators and administrators on efforts to prevent and respond to school-related gender-based violence. Working female-only toilets with a regular stock of menstrual hygiene products will be constructed and made available," The policy recommends that schools develop credible mechanisms to ensure that they remain free of discrimination, harassment and intimidation especially for women and girls. It also emphasises upon providing a safe environment outside the premises of the schools for attainment of education of girls. "Girls' safety outside of school is also recognised as critical to their attendance and overall educational attainment; unfortunately, transportation to and from school can sometimes infringe on their personal safety in some areas. Efforts will be made to ensure girls benefit from initiatives that promote access to safe and reliable transportation, including bicycle access programmes"

Realising that gender stereotypes play a crucial role in girls withdrawing from school, the policy calls for participation from social workers to "hold regular discussions with parents, e.g. on social issues like child marriage, not sending girls to high school or for further studies, placing financial expectations on boys pre-maturely, forming negative perceptions around women employment, involving school-going children in the family profession or household work, and in general, according external factors precedence over formal education." As part of the gender inclusive efforts, the policy also mandates that all educational institutions and affiliated offices conduct gender sensitisation programmes to raise teachers' and educational administrators' awareness of gender-sensitive and inclusive classroom

management. This would include awareness sessions on gender issues to break stereotyped gender roles, on the importance of harassment-free environment and equal treatment of genders, and on legal protections and entitlements for girls and women including the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO), Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, the Maternity Benefit Act (along with its amendment), and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressed) Act.

The policy also emphasises on fostering women's participation and leadership in education and such women could in turn act as strong role models for the girls to attend school regularly. To facilitate the hiring and retention of women in education, the amended Maternity Benefit Act will be implemented to provide creche facilities for educators. By focusing on leadership development, incentive programmes, teacher education, recruitment and retention efforts, these initiatives will ensure women play a leading role in children's education.

### Conclusion

The NEP 2020 has done well by loudly recognizing the challenges faced by gendered categories, minorities and children with special needs. It has also done well in terms of proposing a series of laudable steps including education SEZs to address the structural challenges of education in inaccessible regions. Yet, the new policy errs on multiple fronts. While it may have proposed a new category by clubbing many socio-economic groups for administrative efficiency and better allocation of resources, it does injustice to these historic categories such as Dalits and Adivasis. By doing this, it fails to acknowledge the unique sets of challenges faced by these groups. Similarly, its silence on affirmative action for certain categories can throw up multiple challenges at the time of implementation. To cut the long story short, the roadmap proposed to promote equity and inclusion for special categories is paved with potholes. National Education Policy 2020 requires closer scrutiny, in terms of its implications for the marginalised, disciplinary spaces, autonomy, and constitutional values, among other things. Any mention of reservation in academic institutions, whether for students, teachers, or other employees is absent in the National Education Policy. This is India's third policy which replaces the 1986 NEP. According to the Government, the NEP 2020 is formulated after having considered over 2 lakh suggestions from different levels of local self-bodies, 2.5 lakh gram panchayats, 6,600 blocks, 6,000 ULBs and 676 districts with the aim of holistic productivity and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society with an increased Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of 50% by 2035. The National Education Policy, 2020 has conveyed the structural change in the education system which aims to make India the global knowledge superpower ensuring equity and Inclusion. In order to write a new chapter of the creation of New India, it is necessary that each of our daughters should read and study in this skill and move forward to perform the best in the global competition. This reminds me of a saying by *Swami Vivekananda*, "A country which does not have respect for women, can never progress"—I firmly believe in this and am proud that positive steps are being undertaken to educate and empower women which is their fundamental right.

### References

1. (n.d.). Retrieved from education.gov.in:  
[https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/NEP\\_Final\\_English\\_0.pdf](https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf)
2. INVC Desk. (2021). *NEP 2020 will focus on the safety and security of school-going girls both inside and outside of the campus*. New Delhi: INVC NEWS. Retrieved 2022, from <https://www.internationalnewsandviews.com/nep-2020-will-focus-on-the-safety-and-security-of-school-going-girls-both-inside-and-outside-of-the-campus/>
3. Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports. (2021, January 24). <https://www.dailypioneer.com/2021/state-editions/inclusiveness-of-women-in-sports-is-key-to-making-india-sporting-superpower.html>. (K. Rijju, Ed.) *Inclusiveness of women in sports is key to making India sporting superpower*. Retrieved 2022, from The Pioneer: <https://www.dailypioneer.com>
4. [dst.gov.in/scientific-programmes/scientific-engineering-research/women-scientists-programs](https://dst.gov.in/scientific-programmes/scientific-engineering-research/women-scientists-programs). (n.d.). Retrieved from /dst.gov.in/: <https://dst.gov.in/>
5. Ministry of Women and Child Development. (2021, January 24). *Press Release I frame Page.aspx?PRID=1691891*. (P. Delhi, Ed.) Retrieved 2022, from pib.gov.in: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseIframePage.aspx?PRID=1691891>

6. Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. (2022, July 25). *Press Release Page.aspx?PRID=1844727*. (P. Delhi, Ed.) Retrieved 2022, from pib.gov.in: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1844727>
7. IANS. (2019, July). *draft-nep-advocates-gender-inclusion-fund/*. Retrieved from lokmattimes.com: <https://www.lokmattimes.com/national/draft-nep-advocates-gender-inclusion-fund/>
8. TOI, Ambika Pandit. (2020). *Gender Inclusion Fund, Spl Edu Zones in policy*. New Delhi: Times of India. Retrieved 2022, from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/gender-inclusion-fund-spl-edu-zones-in-policy/articleshow/77252728.cms>
9. Sports, U. M. (2021, January 24). *Inclusiveness of women in sports is key to making India sporting superpower*. (K. Rijiju, Ed.) Retrieved 2022, from The Pioneer: <https://www.dailypioneer.com/2021/state-editions/inclusiveness-of-women-in-sports-is-key-to-making-india-sporting-superpower.html>

#### Links and URL's

1. [https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/5294663\\_Salient-Featuresofnep-Eng-merged.pdf](https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/5294663_Salient-Featuresofnep-Eng-merged.pdf)
2. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1691891>
3. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/voices/nep-2020-making-education-more-inclusive/>
4. <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/gender-inclusion-fund-spl-edu-zones-in-policy/articleshow/77252728.cms#:~:text=The%20NEP%20now%20states%20that,%2C%20conditional%20cash%20transfers%2C%20etc.>
5. <https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2019/jul/18/draft-nep-advocates-gender-inclusion-fund-2005445.html>
6. <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/equitable-and-inclusive-vision-in-the-nep-2020/>
7. <https://odishabytes.com/govt-to-set-up-gender-inclusion-fund-provide-equitable-education-for-all/>
8. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/nep-2020-constitute-gender-inclusion-fund-ramesh-pokhriyal-nishank->
9. <https://www.news18.com/news/india/national-education-policy-2020-gender-inclusion-fund-multilingualism-flexibility-in-streams-of-study-2742471.html>
10. <https://dst.gov.in/pressrelease/kiran-scheme-dst-lights-st-paths-thousands-women-scientists>.

